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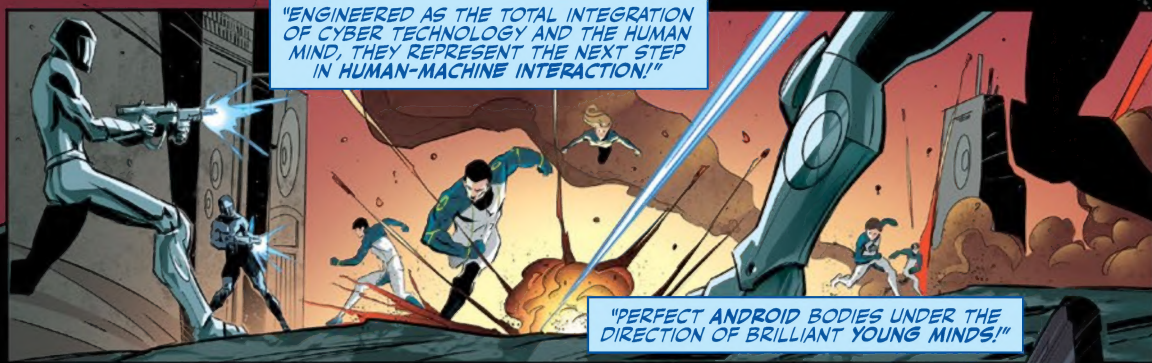
KRRSSSH

"THEY ARE POWER
PERSONIFIED..."



"...FOR THEY
HAVE BEEN..."

AMPED



"ENGINEERED AS THE TOTAL INTEGRATION OF CYBER TECHNOLOGY AND THE HUMAN MIND, THEY REPRESENT THE NEXT STEP IN HUMAN-MACHINE INTERACTION!"

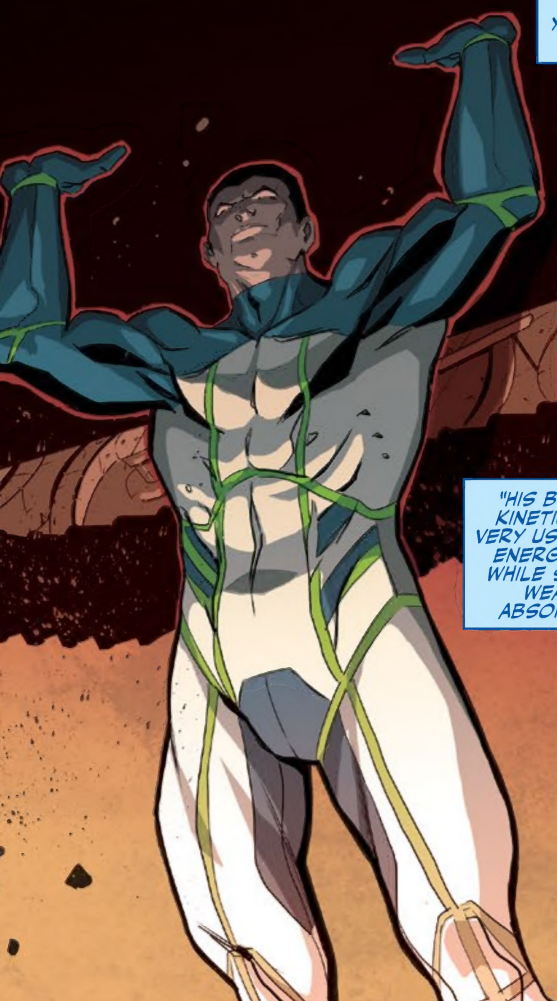
"PERFECT ANDROID BODIES UNDER THE DIRECTION OF BRILLIANT YOUNG MINDS!"



"WE CALL HIM TEMPO, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS..."

"AND SHE IS RADIA, MISTRESS OF SOLID LIGHT!"

"THIS HERCULEAN FELLOW IS VICTOR, AND THERE'S VIRTUALLY NOTHING HE CAN'T CONQUER WITH THAT STRENGTH!"



"WE CALL THIS YOUNG GUY, CHARGE AND THE YOUNG LADY IS SNIPE..."



"HIS BODY CHANNELS KINETIC ENERGY INTO VERY USEFUL ELECTRICAL ENERGY DISCHARGES, WHILE SHE CAN CREATE WEAPONS FROM ABSORBED ENERGY."



"SHE IS ALLURE, AND SHE CAN USE HER INBUILT POWER TO PERSUADE ANYONE TO HER ABSOLUTE WILL."



THESE YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE THE FUTURE...
BROUGHT HERE TODAY!

ABOVE AND BEYOND!

DEVELOPED AND SCRIPTED BY BRIAN AUGUSTYN
DRAWN AND RENDERED BY PASQUALE QUALANO
COLORED AND POLISHED BY YLENIA DINAPOLI
LETTERED AND SPELLCHECKED BY ZACH MATHEWY
EDITED AND QUIBBLED BY BRIAN AUGUSTYN & DAVID LAWRENCE
CREATED AND THUNK UP BY BENNY POWELL



"WHILE THIS DEMONSTRATES THEIR ABILITIES
IN A BATTLE SITUATION, THE POTENTIAL FOR THIS
TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH IS UNLIMITED!"

"FROM MEDICINE, TO COMBAT, TO THE FAR
REACHES OF OUTER SPACE...AND WHILE THE
ADVANCES HAVE SPRUNG FROM MY OWN MIND, WE
OWE EVERYTHING TO THESE SIX BRAVE YOUNG
PEOPLE WHO HAVE HELPED US PERFECT THE LINK!"

THANK
YOU ALL FOR
YOUR ATTENTION AND
SUPPORT. AS YOU KNOW, I
AM DR. VULMARO KANE,
HEAD OF *PROJECT
AMPED*.

AND, WE COULD **LITERALLY** NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THESE YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN.

THUS FAR, THEIR UNIQUE NEUROLOGICAL MAKE-UPS HAVE PROVEN THE ONLY ONES TO BE CAPABLE OF SUCCESSFULLY UPLINKING WITH THE TECHNOLOGY.

AND THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW WHY **YET**, WE WILL.

≡HMPF≡

YOU **DOUBT** ME, AGENT HARROW?

WHETHER IT IS SOME COMPENSATORY... GIFT OF THEIR CONDITIONS, OR A RESULT OF YEARS SPENT LIVING INTERNALLY, I WILL FIND OUT WHAT THEIR **UNKNOWN FACTOR** IS --

-- BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THE EXPERIMENTS.

TRUST ME, JANE, THEIR SAFETY AND HEALTH ARE AS IMPORTANT TO ME AS TO YOU.

THEY ARE NOT MERE SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS, I PROMISE.

NO... LIKE YOU SAID, THEY ALSO HOLD THE KEY TO YOUR PROJECT'S ULTIMATE SUCCESS.

BUT I WILL NOT ALLOW THEM TO BE PUT AT ANY RISK... I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T LET ME **LIVE** IF I TRIED.

WELL, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SPENT MANY MILLIONS ON THIS PROJECT, AND I SUSPECT THESE REPRESENTATIVES WOULD LOVE TO MEET THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN QUESTION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE **PROJECT AMPED** POSSIBLE...

KATHRYN PRICE...
SNIPE!

VICTOR GENTILE...
VICTOR!

DAVID ROBBINGS...
CHARGE!

TAIKO TAKANAWA...
TEMPO!

ALLISON COFFIELD...
ALLURE!


RACHEL DAHL...
RADIA!






THE ONE
THING I *DO*
KNOW ABOUT THESE
YOUNG FOLKS AND OUR
TECHNOLOGY--THEY ARE
AT THE *PERFECT* AGE
AND DEVELOPMENT
FOR THE INTERFACE
TO WORK...


...OLD
ENOUGH TO BE
ABLE TO MENTALLY
HANDLE THE DEMANDS
OF THE PROCESS, YET
YOUNG ENOUGH TO
BE FLEXIBLE TO
NEW SORTS OF
STIMULUS.



WHILE
THE BATTLE
SIMULATION YOU SAW
JUST A BIT AGO, WAS A
COMPUTER GENERATED
ANIMATION, THESE ARE THE
ANDROID FORMS EACH OF
THE KIDS WILL CONTROL
THROUGH THE
UPLINK.

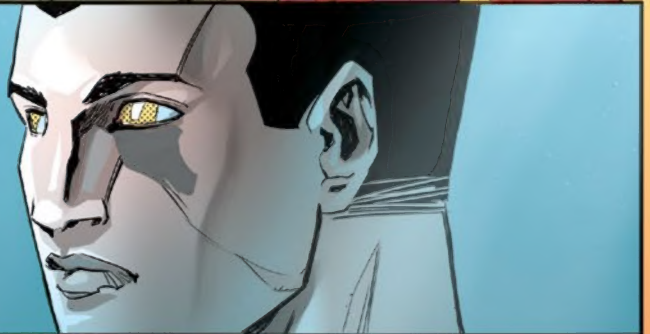


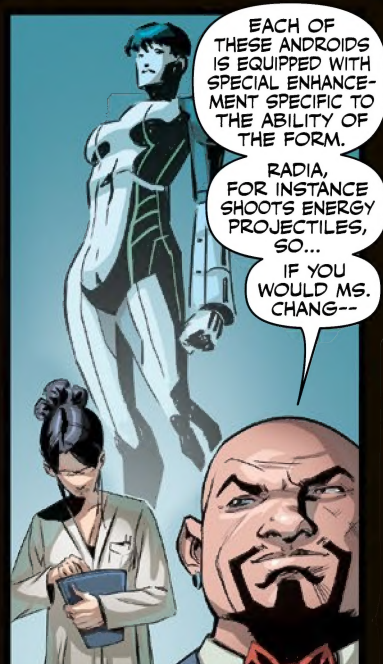
THE NEURAL
LINKS HAVE ALREADY
BEEN IMPLANTED IN OUR
HUMAN VOLUNTEERS, SO
THEY COULD REACH OUT--
WITH THEIR MINDS--AND
JUST *TAKE OVER* THEIR
ANDROID COUNTER-
PARTS...



...BUT
FORTUNATELY,
I HAVEN'T
SHOWN THEM
HOW!

HAHAHAHAHA







NO, NO--DON'T WORRY, I WOULD NEVER SHOOT MYSELF IN THE FUNDING AND APPROPRIATIONS--! JUST A DEMONSTRATION.



BUT EACH OF THESE IS A UNIQUE PIECE OF STELLAR CRAFTSMANSHIP.

AND ONLY KANE KINETICS COULD HAVE BROUGHT IT TO YOU!



AND ONLY I COULD HAVE ENVISIONED IT ALL!



OKAY, WE GET IT... YOU'RE PRETTY AND DOGGONE IT, PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP



WELL, THAT'S ABOUT EVERYTHING FOR NOW--WE'LL LET YOU ALL KNOW HOW THE NEXT TESTS GO ASAP.

AND, LET'S REMEMBER, YOU SIGNED THE NON-DISCLOSURE FORMS MONTHS AGO...



DR.
LAZARUS? WE'RE
RECEIVING A REPORT
FROM OUR INSIDE
SOURCE AT KANE
KINETICS...

HE HAS
UNVEILED HIS
BREAKTHROUGH
JUST MOMENTS
AGO. AT THE TAOS
LOCATION...

IT
WAS JUST A
MATTER OF
TIME...

...THOUGH
THAT TIME HAS
ALL BUT RUN
OUT.



ARE OUR
PEOPLE
STANDING
BY?

YES
SIR.



DR. KANE
AND I HAVE
NEVER BEEN...
FRIENDS, BUT
IT SEEMS HE'S
ABOUT TO *SAVE*
MY LIFE...



...WHETHER
HE *LIKES* IT
OR NOT.



THANK YOU,
DOCTOR.

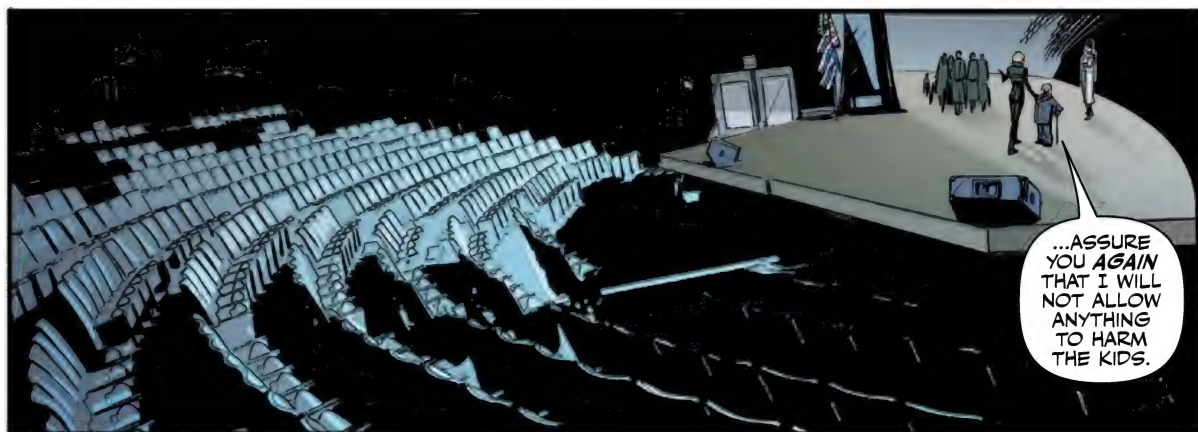


GIVE
THE ORDER
TO MOVE
IN!

I WANT
THAT **UPLINK**
TECHNOLOGY!



I
NEED
IT.



...ASSURE
YOU *AGAIN*
THAT I WILL
NOT ALLOW
ANYTHING
TO HARM
THE KIDS.



WHAT
IF THE *HARM*
COMES FROM
YOUR *TECH*,
DOCTOR?

THAT'S
IMPOSSIBLE,
JANE.

AT
ANY SIGN OF
PROBLEM, THE UP-
LINK AUTOMATICALLY
STOPS, LEAVING THE
KIDS BAKE IN THEIR
OWN BODIES.
THAT'S THE
DEFAULT.

BESIDES,
THEY'RE NEVER
GOING TO SEE ACTUAL
COMBAT OR DANGER—
JUST SIMULATION TESTS—
NO MORE DANGEROUS
THAN A VIDEO
GAME.



OKAY...
BUT FROM
THIS MOMENT ON,
I AM *GLUED* TO
YOUR SIDE. THINK
OF ME AS YOUR
DEFAULT.

≥SIGH≤



BELIEVE
ME, NO ONE
WANTS THIS TO
WORK MORE THAN
THOSE KIDS—THIS
IS GREAT *FUN*
FOR THEM!





SOMETHING'S...
HAPPENING...
I THINK. I'M
GETTING MENTAL
IMPRESSIONS OF...
DANGER--?

WELL IF
YOU DON'T
KNOW, WHO
WOULD?



WHAT
IS--?!

--WAIT...



SOMEONE
IS...**COMING**.
FOR US.



THIS IS
IMPOSSIBLE!

TELL THAT
TO THE **EARTH-
QUAKE!**

WHAT'S
HAPPENING?!

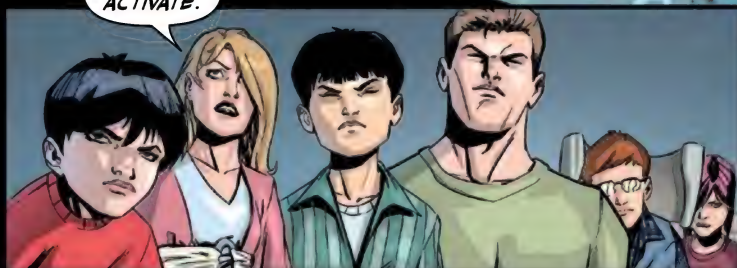


KRRRASHH

WHAT
THE
HE--?!!

DON'T
KNOW--WE
HAVE TO GET
THE KIDS TO
SAFETY!
NOW!!

TROUBLE
GUYS.
ACTIVATE.



NEXT: MORE TROUBLE,
FEW ANSWERS...

VICTOR

Real Name: Victor Gentile

"'Tis finished! all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin:
Fling open wide the golden gates,
And let the victors in."
— Henry Alford, 1867

BACKGROUND:

Victor Gentile was a vibrant young man, full of hope and promise. He was uncommonly large for his age, which garnered him the poor pun nickname, "Gentle Giant" as a play on his name. The gentle part, however, was decidedly ironic, as he was an extremely aggressive and driven athlete.

Victor was the first and only freshman to ever become the starting quarterback of his high school all-state, varsity team. He was leading his team to a winning championship season, when he was maliciously struck in the back by a rival player. The vicious blow crushed his spinal column irreparably, rendering him a paraplegic.

His parents, both very politically connected, pushed for his inclusion in the AMPED program. At first, I objected, merely on principal, until I did my due diligence and met the lad. I saw in him an inner strength that I have seen in precious few throughout my long life... a strength that reminds me of one of my dearest friends.

Despite his strength of will, Victor has proven to be ambivalent, brooding and even resentful at times. He realizes that even with the android body, he will never achieve his dreams of becoming a sports hero. It is my hope that the process might rekindle the flame that I believe still smolders deep inside him.

If that happens, Victor might discover that he can still be a different kind of hero.

ANDROID ABILITIES:

His android body has grown to become incredibly strong and resilient. He can lift-press over 50 tons — exponentially more than any of the others. He is fast, for his size, a trait which continues to astonish me. The body is also far more hardened against damage than his peers, and I believe it easily capable of withstanding most conventional heavy munitions and even explosives.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Despite my insistence during their team-bonding exercises that they each choose a nom de guerre, he refused. I determined that in this one instance, his own name of Victor would suffice. He is my first choice for group leader should things progress as foreseen. I only hope he will rise to this role in time.



ALLURE

Real Name: Allison Coffield

"And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way."

— Oliver Goldsmith, 1770

BACKGROUND:

Allison Coffield was a beautiful little girl, but she was born with spina bifida. Like many who suffer from this congenital disorder, she was born unable to walk. Like many children who are born with this condition, she struggled in learning math... Rather than becoming frustrated in her studies, young Allison dove into her other subjects, and excelled in her reading skills.

She often chose to "escape" into the worlds she found within fantasy novels... sharing their adventures and befriending those who lived within the pages. She was exceedingly bright, and easily the smartest among her peers. But she felt that she was a beautiful butterfly, forever trapped within a cocoon.

When I discovered her as a candidate, I was struck by the inner beauty she seemed to exude. She has a glow that instantly entrances everyone in her presence and instills a sense of wonder... and even hope. I had no choice but to accept her for the program, immediately.

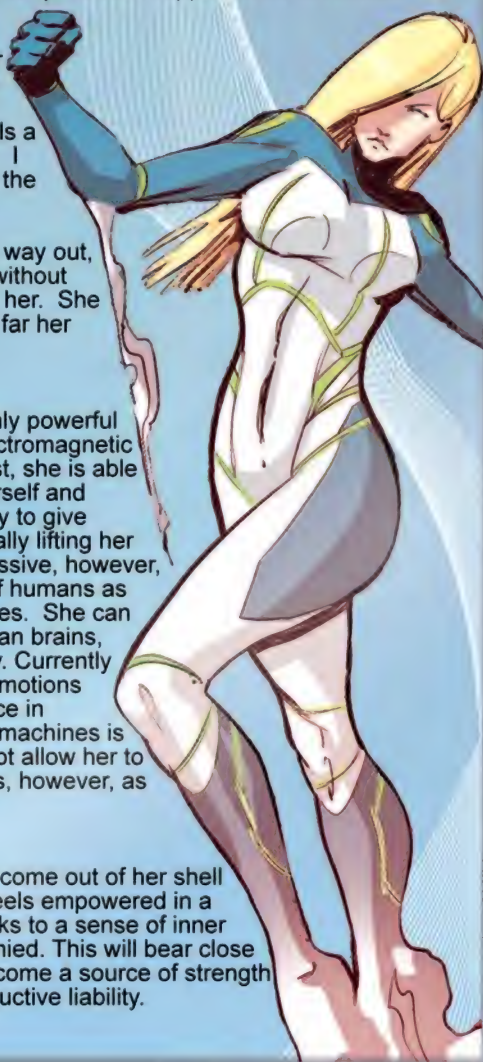
The AMPED program offered her a way out, and a chance to expand her brain without the physical limitations imposed on her. She never expected, however, just how far her brain would take her.

ANDROID ABILITIES:

Her android body possesses a highly powerful ability to tap into aspects of the electromagnetic spectrum with stunning results. First, she is able to create magnetic shielding for herself and those around her. Next is her ability to give herself a form of flight by magnetically lifting her synthetic body. What is most impressive, however, is her ability to tap into the minds of humans as well as the ability to control machines. She can read the electrical impulses of human brains, giving her a crude form of telepathy. Currently it is more vague impressions and emotions that she is able to read and influence in humans... but her ability to control machines is nearly absolute. This ability does not allow her to control her fellow AMPED members, however, as they have a consciousness.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Allison's transformation has let her come out of her shell both figuratively and literally. She feels empowered in a way that belies her years and speaks to a sense of inner longing that she was previously denied. This will bear close observation as to whether it will become a source of strength or a distracting and ultimately destructive liability.



CHARGE

Real Name: David Robbins

"Charge once more, then and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall."
— Matthew Arnold, 1866

BACKGROUND:

David Robbins was born with a motor neuron disease related to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), the same condition that affected Stephen Hawking... a man David idolizes. He has been inspired by Hawking, and wants to leave his mark on the world as well.

Though his condition continues to deteriorate, David has poured himself into studying the sciences, with a particular fascination with the cosmos, and all its workings. Additionally, David is in love with mythology, ancient battles, and history. He is incredibly bright, gifted, resourceful and has a vivid imagination.

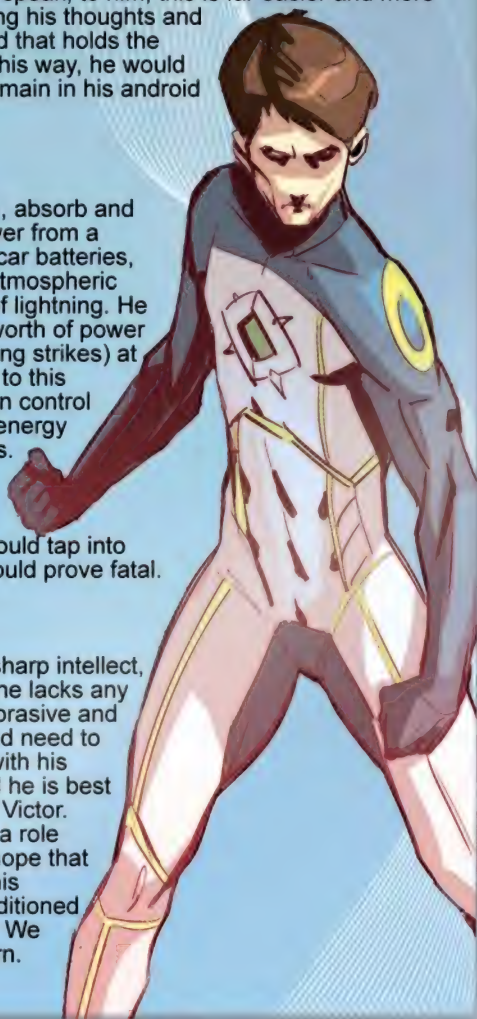
He is the most enthusiastic among his peers with his AMPED body. Because he was forced to use a computer to speak, to him, this is far easier and more liberating a method of communicating his thoughts and ideas. He believes that it is his mind that holds the most value, not his body. If he had his way, he would never return to his real body, and remain in his android form permanently.

ANDROID ABILITIES:

His android has the ability to control, absorb and project electricity. He can draw power from a variety of sources, such as outlets, car batteries, turbines, and even under the right atmospheric conditions, the very air in the form of lightning. He is capable of storing over 1200 kA worth of power (more than 10 massive direct lightning strikes) at a time, and is continually absorbing to this maximum capacity passively. He can control electricity by even directing arcs of energy from lightning or directly from outlets. This control can be exerted even if his own internal storage is at maximum, allowing him to channel even more energy. In a pinch, he could tap into his own power cells, but doing so could prove fatal.

SPECIAL NOTES:

With his knowledge of history, and sharp intellect, he is a brilliant tactician. However, he lacks any real experience and comes off as abrasive and bossy. If he wanted to lead, he would need to learn how to inspire, not browbeat with his "superior" intellect. This is why I feel he is best suited in a supporting role to that of Victor. Unfortunately, I don't know if that is a role David is willing to play. I sincerely hope that he can become a team player, but his isolated experiences may have conditioned him to feel and behave like a loner. We will see if he is smart enough to learn.



TEMPO

Real Name: Kaito Takanawa

"When Spring is old, and dewy winds
Blow from the south, with odors sweet,
I see my love, in shadowy groves,
Speed down dark aisles on shining feet."
— James Maurice Thompson, 1878

BACKGROUND:

Kaito Takanawa was an Asian-American of Japanese descent born with severe congenital cervical spinal stenosis – a degenerative spinal disease that led to complete paralysis of his legs and would eventually lead to a total immobility of his entire body.

Despite this prognosis, he fondly remembers running when he was a kid, and was always "dancing" to music that his older siblings would play. These memories he refers to as his "happy times" and they are what inspire him to work hard.

He has an overactive imagination as well, and tends to act before he thinks. He is borderline attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which he is all too aware of. It is his own self-awareness that endears him to others, as it manifests itself in a self-deprecating and wry sense of humor.

He has always remained upbeat about his condition and decided that happiness is a choice, and so he simply chooses to be happy. He makes it his goal to cheer up those around him, which has often gotten him into trouble.

ANDROID ABILITIES:

His android form is capable of moving at supersonic speeds in excess of Mach 10. His brain processing speed, while moving, has become greatly enhanced as well to allow him to react to his movements. His body has a near frictionless coating with special silicates to keep him from overheating at his fastest movements as well as negate corrosion from free-atomic oxygen. This makes him very "slippery" everywhere except the soles of his feet, which are a special self-repairing tread for traction

SPECIAL NOTES:

When he discovered that his android possessed superhuman speed, he became unstoppable in his thirst to "move."

This, combined with his love of humor, have led to a large number of practical jokes... some with disastrous consequences in the labs. He is never mean-spirited in his jokes, and it is difficult to remain angry with him. The staff and his teammates just wished he would consider the consequences beforehand.



RADIA

Real Name: Rachel Dahl

"Virtue could see to do what virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude..."
— John Milton, 1645

BACKGROUND:

Rachel Dahl is a troubled young girl, but she wasn't always. By the time she was only 10 years old, she was an artistic prodigy, capable of rendering works of art in a variety of media. Her skills were fast gaining the attention of the art community, and she seemed destined for a life among society's elite.

That was when tragedy struck. On the way back home from an art gallery, she was in a horrific car accident. When they pulled her from the wreckage her right arm and both of her legs were so horribly mangled, they required amputation. But that loss would pale in comparison to the true toll that horrible night took, as her own mother did not survive the ordeal.

The once vibrant girl soon became dark and brooding. She focused her pain, thoughts and feelings inward and despite the loss of her primary hand, she taught herself to paint once more with her left hand. Her paintings, however, now took on a decidedly different hue than before, as she began expressing her darkest feelings through morbid, yet inspired new works of art.

I was familiar with her story, as I myself had admired her prior work and felt she was destined for true greatness. Yet while the art community did not embrace her new artistic expression and style, it spoke to me deeply. I knew I had to offer her a place in the AMPED program.

ANDROID ABILITIES:

Her android body has the astonishing ability to create "solid light" constructs. The shape and nature of the constructs are seemingly without limitation beyond her own imagination. The implications of this ability are staggering. The photon emissions are dense and strong but require her constant concentration to remain cohesive. Her natural artistic abilities come in handy, of course. How she fully develops her powers remains to be seen, but I believe she may become the most powerful of them all.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Rachel is in many ways an enigma. She refuses to open up to any of us, and spurns any attempts at friendship among the others. She dyed her hair pink as some form of statement, and demanded that her android form likewise carry this distinction. Her mental state may prove to be the biggest challenge I face in this experiment, but I feel confident that the end result will be worth it. Her determination reminds me of myself, and a kindred spirit. I just hope my judgment is not clouded on the matter or the consequences could prove dire for us all.



SNIPE

Real Name: Kathryn Pryce

"In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger:
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood."
- William Shakespeare, 1599

BACKGROUND:

Kathryn "Kat" Pryce was born with Achondroplasia (or as it is more commonly known, dwarfism) that resulted in severe scoliosis as well as curvature of her spine, greatly limiting her mobility. Her doctors recommend that she use a wheelchair, however, she refuses and instead utilizes custom-made crutches to walk. This stubbornness sums up Kathryn in a nutshell.

Kathryn (or Kat as she prefers to be called) insists that the reality of who she truly is cannot be defined by the body she inhabits. As such, she rarely acknowledges the limitations most would place on her, and as a result she often surpasses any and all expectations. Her sheer force of will and mental image of herself are unbreakable.

I am, of course, quite acquainted with the effects of dwarfism, as it's a condition I have suffered from my long life... albeit not to the devastating extent that Kat suffers from. Kat's plucky spirit immediately made her a top candidate for the AMPED project.

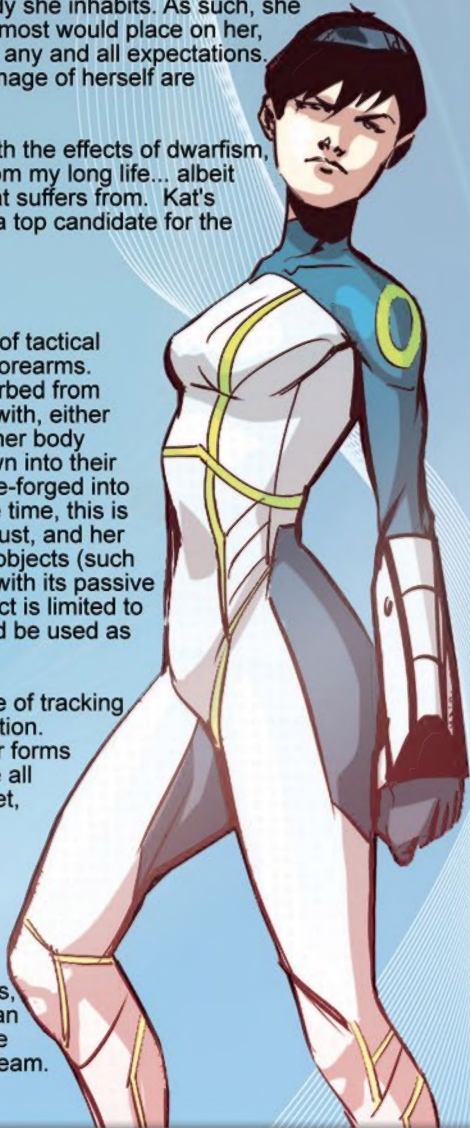
ANDROID ABILITIES:

Her android body has a wide range of tactical projectiles which it can fire from its forearms. These projectiles are built and absorbed from matter which she comes in contact with, either subconsciously or consciously. As her body touches things, they are broken down into their molecular form and then internally re-forged into the projectiles she uses. Most of the time, this is merely particulate matter, such as dust, and her sensors leave obvious constructed objects (such as vehicles, chairs, etc) untouched with its passive absorption. The "disintegration" effect is limited to inorganic material, but by itself could be used as a weapon as well.

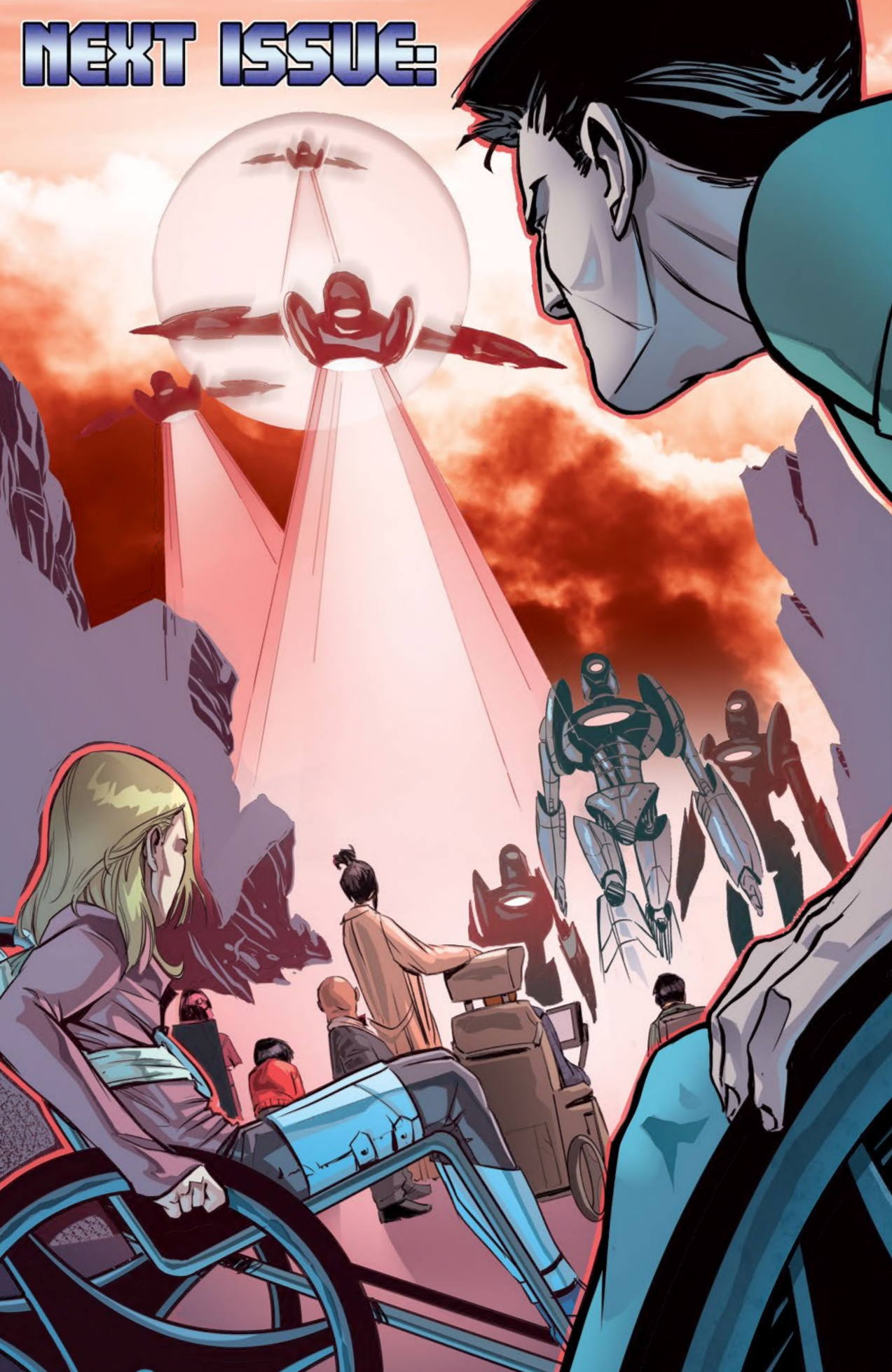
Her built-in sensor array are capable of tracking multiple targets in miles in any direction. Radar, sonar, infrared, UV and other forms of audio/visual location methods are all built in. Once she locks onto a target, her munitions do the rest.

SPECIAL NOTES:

While she may not seem it at first, she does not mind the damage she is capable of inflicting. She has a big heart and cares deeply for others, but she also has a dark side. She can be deadly serious, and I suspect she may be the most dangerous of the team.

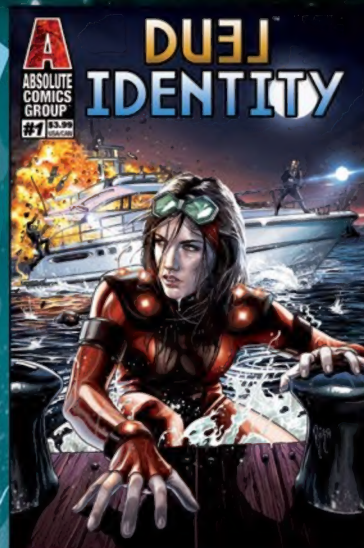


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WHITE WIDOW



AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

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